

Sent on Sept 18, 2009

USAN New York Presidential Candidate Mike Hodge Uses Personal Attacks to... UNITE?

In an email blast sent to thousands of New York SAG members, Mike Hodge uses lies and personal attacks to discredit MembershipFirst and our Presidential candidate, Anne-Marie Johnson. The following is MembershipFirst's response to the September 4th email message.

Mike Hodge and USAN say, "We represent and are comprised of African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Caucasians, Jews, Muslims, Christians--the full breadth of diversity our country and our union have to offer"

-Under the leadership of President Alan Rosenberg and the helpful guidance of National Chair Jason Stuart, Sumi Haru, SAG's Duncan Crabtree-Ireland and Ms. Johnson, SAG created the Lesbian-Gay- Bi-Sexual-Transgender National Committee, benefitting a large and proud group of SAG performers. We find it unfortunate that Mr. Hodge and his USAN board candidates left this very significant group of SAG members out of their "full breadth of diversity."

Mike Hodge and USAN say, "We are proud of our national board, under a combined UFS, USAN, and Regional Branch Division majority, appointed David White to our union's top staff position as Interim National Director.- the first African American to hold that position. This is one of the reasons we were saddened when Anne-Marie Johnson and other MembershipFirst candidates filed a lawsuit against the Guild to remove Mr. White."

-The lawsuit has nothing to do with the race of Mr. White or any other defendant. The lawsuit challenges a flaw in SAG's Constitution which ignores California State Law. For Mr. Hodge and his fellow USAN board candidates of color to imply otherwise, is deceitful.

Mike Hodge and USAN say, "Our members have lost over \$100 million because of the ill-conceived negotiating strategies of Ms. Johnson and MembershipFirst."

SAG's "ill-conceived negotiating strategies" were approved by the National Board in July 2008 (MF1st majority) and once again in Oct. 2008 (U4S/USAN/RBD majority). This AMPTP propagandized trumpeted figure of \$100 million is calculated based on every SAG job being a 12 hour day, using the maximum number of background performers.

Yes, SAG achieved boiler-plate increases. But we gave up the following in return:

- No guaranteed SAG jurisdiction from our signatories in New Media.
- No residuals for Original Product Made For New Media budgeted at \$25K a minute or less.
- No residuals for Pre- 1971 movies and Pre-1974 t.v. shows aired on New Media.
- 17/24 days of free re-runs (no residuals paid) for traditional broadcast television series streamed on New Media. A payment of \$23.00 for unlimited re-runs for six months after the free streaming days.
- Loss of Clip Consent in New Media.

-And so on...

Mike Hodge and USAN say, "The slurs and attacks publicly voiced by Ms. Johnson and MembershipFirst have cost our union the respect and partnership of the DGA, WGA, and most regrettably, our sister union AFTRA."

-Regarding the DGA: It is the opinion of many, not just MembershipFirst, that the DGA irrevocably harmed SAG's negotiations and the negotiations of the WGA, by making their deal with the AMPTP while the WGA was on strike, setting a weak template for any union that negotiated after the them.

"The perception persists among many writers that the DGA is cozy with the studios, making it harder for other guilds to hold the line on financial issues in the past."

Everyone On Edge over DGA deal: Daily Variety, 1/16/08

"The companies have reneged on this agreement (EST residual formula)...". "This may be their deal with the DGA, but that was never our agreement." WGA Board member John Bowman: WGAW website, 11/08

"For over a month we have been urging the conglomerates to return to the table and bargain in good faith. They have chosen to negotiate with the DGA instead." WGA Official Response, Daily Variety, 1/18/08

-Regarding the WGA: please visit SAG.org, click on "member alerts" and go to the WGA letter of February 14, 2008.

Anne-Marie Johnson's personal relationship with the current leadership of the WGA is solid:

"One Of Tyler Perry's Actors Confronts Him". deadlinehollywood.com, Oct 6, 2008

"Anne-Marie, thanks so much for your stand in support of the House of Payne writers. The WGA is grateful to you and so are the writers." WGA NED David Young, Oct. 7, 2008.

"Thanks, Anne-Marie, this is great! I hope we can use your example to generate more SAG support for the writers." Terrence Long, WGA, Oct. 6, 2008

-Regarding AFTRA: They chose to negotiate the 2008 TV/Theatrical Contract on their own, pulling out of joint negotiations in the 11th hour.

Mike Hodge and USAN say, "Unfortunately Ms. Johnson has made herself a pariah with AFTRA leadership."

-Ms. Johnson IS AFTRA leadership. She communicated with the AFTRA members and they responded by electing her to a 4 year seat on the AFTRA National Board. (Second highest vote getter).

Mike Hodge and USAN say, "She declares she wants to 'bring all actors under one roof' but provides no legally, financially, or ethically viable strategy to accomplish this."

-You can find Anne-Marie Johnson and the MembershipFirst plan at www.membershipfirst.com. It's UFS/USAN/RBD who offer NO plan. Only platitudes.

"We call on all SAG members to reject any and all personal attacks in this election..."

Implying that Ms. Johnson and the other Plaintiffs filed the lawsuit against SAG with the desire to "remove" SAG's first African American NED IS a personal attack. As is calling Ms. Johnson "a pariah".

The lack of substantive information yet the substantial amount of personal attacks only demonstrates how less than sincere Mr. Hodge and his USAN cohorts are regarding “uniting”.

MembershipFirst

For our list of Candidates, please visit www.membershipfrist.com.

MembershipFirst endorses the independent New York Board Candidate slate, Solidarity And Gains Now!.

For their list of candidates, please visit www.solidarityandgainsnow.org.